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## CURRENT EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE

*Religion in the English Public Schools.* The Independent, Nov. 8:

What is described as the greatest religious controversy of the past ten years is now agitating, not only London, but most of the cities and the towns of England and Wales. The controversy has to do with the public schools, or, as they are known in England, the Board schools, and the Parochial or Voluntary schools. All who have given any attention to the English system of primary education, know that it is a comparatively new one. Previous to the Education Act of 1870, the secular education of children was cared for, not by the State, but by the various denominations. Chief among these was the Church of England, which had an extensive system of day schools. The Act of 1870 introduced a new element in the primary instruction of children. The State intervened with a plan for the establishment and extension of schools which should not be under denominational control, but which should be governed by local boards, and should, in addition to Government grants—which are also given to Voluntary or denominational schools—have the right to levy local rates. The Board schools have increased very rapidly, and through subsequent legislation have approached more nearly to a complete system of public instruction.

The religious question comes in with respect to the religious instruction imparted to the children. In the Act of 1870 there was inserted what is known as the "Conscience Clause." The essential portion of this clause is as follows:

"It shall not be required as a condition of any child being admitted into, or continuing in the school, that he shall attend, or abstain from attending, any Sunday school, or any place of religious worship, or that he shall attend any religious observance or any instruction in religious subjects in the school or elsewhere, from which observance or instruction he may be withdrawn by his parent; or that he shall, if withdrawn by his parent, attend the school on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parents belong.

"The time or times during which any religious observance is practised or instruction in religious subjects is given at any meeting of the school, shall be either at the beginning or at the end, or at the beginning and the end of such meetings, and shall be inserted in a time table to be approved by the education department, and to be kept permanently and conspicuously affixed in every school room; and any scholar may be withdrawn by his parent from such observance or instruction without forfeiting any of the other benefits of the school."

An additional paragraph prescribes that the school shall be open at all times to inspection by Government inspectors, except as to the religious books used, and the religious instruction given. This latter provision was

intended especially for the denominational schools, which, if conducted according to the conscience clause, are allowed to participate in the annual parliamentary grant. There was added a prohibition, meant to apply to the Board or Government schools, providing that they shall not teach any religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination.

The point round which the present controversy rages, is this last clause. When the Act of 1870 was passed, it was understood to be satisfactory to all denominations. It was agreed that the Government schools, made up of children of various denominations, ought not to teach the creeds or formularies of any denomination, and this has been generally satisfactory to all the patrons of the Board schools until a comparatively recent date.

In London the triennial election for the School Board takes place during the present month, and it is made the occasion of an issue, in which the whole country seems to be deeply interested, between those who want to have the Board schools teach certain doctrines definitely and those who desire to have the present rules respecting religious instruction rigidly adhered to. The occasion for the controversy is said to have been the answer given by a child in a Board school to the question "Who is the father of Jesus?" The reply was, "Joseph." Mr. Athelstan Riley, a member of the Board, reported it, and took the ground that some definite rules ought to be given to teachers with regard to instructing children as to the divinity of Christ. After some discussion the Board issued such instructions in what is currently referred to as "the circular." This circular directed teachers to present the Christian religion revealed in the Bible and to impress upon children "the relation in which they stand to God the Father as their Creator, to God the Son as their Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier." The object of this rule is that the children should be instructed in the doctrine of the Trinity.

The circular has been seriously attacked as being the entering wedge of denominational instruction. It is held to be in violation of the common agreement represented in the conscience clause and is interpreted as being an attempt on the part of the High Church party in the Church of England to prepare the way for the teaching of denominational creed, or to promote such agitation as will result in allowing the Voluntary schools to participate in the local rates. On the side of the supporters of the circular are enlisted, not only the High Church element of the establishment but also, it is claimed, a number of other churchmen who are sorry that the question has been precipitated, but, since the issue has been made, feel bound in conscience to stand by the Board. The President of the Board, Mr. Diggle, who was educated for the ministry, and who served as rector some years, but who withdrew from the ministry when he entered upon his career as a member of the Board of Education, is regarded as the leader of the party, who are stigmatized as "Diggleites." On the other side of the controversy, seem to be arrayed all the Nonconformist bodies, who protest against what they regard as a violation of the conscience clause. The result of the agitation will appear in the election for members of the London School Board, for which an active campaign is being carried on. It appears that the Board has made special ar-

rangements by which instruction in the Old Testament only is given in those schools which are attended by Jewish children. A strong point is made of this by the followers of Mr. Diggle. They say if exception can be made in favor of one denomination, it is right to ask it for another denomination. Of course there is strong opposition to the teaching of the doctrine of the Trinity on the part of the liberals, Unitarians and others for doctrinal reasons; and some of the teachers holding a liberal faith, or perhaps no faith at all, have not been backward in protesting against what they regard as an attempt to apply a test to their religious convictions.

It may be of interest in this connection to quote the rule under which religious instruction has been given hitherto in the London Board Schools, and also in most of the other Board schools throughout the country. It makes arrangements for "regular and progressive lessons of the Bible, including the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the sacred biographies, histories, facts and lessons from the life of our Lord, the principle parables, the learning by heart passages which inculcate truthfulness, temperance, obedience to parents, reverence for God and his word."

There are nearly 3,000 Board schools in England and Wales, of which 91 exclude the Bible. Birmingham requires it to be read without note or comment. In connection with this, however, there is an arrangement which allows the Evangelical churches of the city to supply religious teaching of an undenominational character out of school hours.

The Nonconformist papers and pulpits are making a strong fight against what they call Diggleism. Perhaps the presidential address at the Baptist Union voices, as near as may be, the general Nonconformist sentiment in these words:

"We do not believe in Government undertaking the work of teaching religion either to children or adults; we do not feel satisfied in leaving this important and solemn matter to the mixed multitude, the clergy of the Established Church; and we do not intend, as far as we can prevent, that any national or municipal funds shall be used, directly or indirectly, to teach our children religion contrary to the faith of their fathers."

The Archbishop of Canterbury has recently expressed himself as follows:

"In 1870 it was agreed that religion and morals should be taught in the London Board schools. 'Religion' undoubtedly meant the Christian religion. No other was spoken of. If any parties to that agreement thought any other religion would or could be understood they were free to say so and bound to say so. The Christian religion teaches that Christ is God, did for man what none but God could do, and taught that the Father could give his Holy Spirit to be our living Friend and Comforter. The few sections who have asserted that such facts are contradictory to faith in one God, or are impossible with God, have not altered the universal conception of what the Christian religion is. Children taught these great facts from Scripture soon feel themselves answerable for their conduct in a way which is not attainable by moral teaching alone without this Christian basis. Christians are sure that this is so, because the facts are true and human life is incomplete without them. I believe this Christian religion to be very well taught in many Board schools. I have heard Board school teachers called the evangelists of some huge districts. I am confident that the vast majority of parents desire

their children to be taught it. To them and others the power belongs of securing by their votes that it shall be taught as agreed."

*The Work of Preparatory Schools in English*, CASKIE HARRISON, *The Dial*, November 16th, 1894.

The Academic Treatment of English, H. E. SCUDDER, *Atlantic*, November, deals with College English: "The Function of English Literature, even in college, can never be reduced to merely academic terms. It is too vital a force, too intimate in its relations to our breathing life to permit of that.

I wish to divert [this invitation] into a ground for reiterating some of the peculiar difficulties to which secondary schools must adjust themselves as the conditions of their existence, while colleges persist in evading the difficulties they are better situated for controlling: in this way I shall endeavor to emphasize the selfishness of the college attitude towards secondary schools and society at large. These difficulties of secondary schools are less likely than ever to be comprehended by the college instructor or the general critic, now that the very existence of any difficulties in the conduct of schools has been so successfully disguised by the great decemvirate; and it is a public duty, as well as an honorable self-protection, for conscientious school-masters to present their side of the question.

If colleges are still dissatisfied with the tribute of helpless schools, *quosque tandem!* Surely, appreciation is the one reservation a college professor might be expected to demand for his own, for himself and his specialty. Schools have long ago realized that all the teaching a boy gets is at school: must we now, while the friction of training still burns, expect him to exult in the discipline of coercion or restraint? It is after the castigation that mothers teach they have been cruel to be kind: do colleges expect schools to derange the steps of the process, when the college reserves to itself the name of Alma Mater? The school can do no better than the lightning-rod man who sells to people that do not want to buy; the colleges must reconcile purchasers to their bargains, and lead them to detect unsuspected glories in their possessions.

To secure appreciation of any study is given only to exceptional teachers and pupils in exceptional relations: even in the exact sciences, beginning with arithmetic, the theoretical discussion is always neglected in the hurry towards the "answer"; in literature, whose aim as a study is not the organization and manipulation of enumerated details, but identity with a sense and a spirit, the lack of a practical nucleus is an almost overpowering difficulty, especially in an age that, in the face of library statistics, reads only for information, or diversion, or relief from thought. In teaching literature, the methods are few and old; and the work of appreciation is not furthered by methods so much as by sympathy, to which few are susceptible. Interest cannot be manufactured, and no way of innoculating pupils with genuine interest has yet been discovered: certainly college professors have made no such discovery, for no class of instructors has had smaller influence on their pupils, as the pupils themselves testify.

Moreover, in teaching English to English-speaking boys there is one special difficulty. Original work, involving grammatical and rhetorical facility, is hard work in any language; in his own, as the boy already enjoys the practical advantage of speech, which appears to him the culmination of linguistic mastery, and as he does not find himself impelled towards written expression, he looks on required composition as arbitrary, and refuses his interest. Composition without interest, under such disciplinary conditions as the present age does not favor, can indeed be taught, but is not worth teaching.

At this moment, the colleges, having suffered many things in dreams because of English, are going through various types of penitential spasms with the characteristic fervor of devotees. But if English is just now so all-important a matter, why have they been so long finding it out? and, now that they have satisfied themselves of its importance, why do they not aid the schools toward determining the best practical procedure for attaining its proper position and proportions?

To follow Cornell, and exclude all candidates who do not come up to their standard in English alone, is illogical, so long as not all college presidents can spell, and reports to college boards on English need not conform to the college's own resident authority. To assign for compositions such subjects as Columbia has of late been giving, shows absolute ignorance of the youth of to-day, their environment and the atmosphere they breathe, and what schools can make of them. Harvard's examinations in English are perfunctory for a "pass" and almost exclusive for a "credit." Yale's examinations are rather in literature than in English. To make the writing of English an excluding condition for entrance is, in view of the lottery of examinations, a questionable strain of deglutition: to make the English examination a test of memory as to the contents of a few books is to lay the stress wrongly. To know, however well, the contents of a few books implies no sympathy with literature, which in the wide access to electives, is more than likely to be ignored or pursued as a "snap"; and, for a mere draft on the memory, history would be better from every point of view.

If colleges would help the work that schools confess their inability to perform without projecting the general difficulties into the vantage-ground of the college, and if college professors would learn the duties and the functions of teaching and examining, then the situation would be somewhat improved. But it will not be entirely corrected until the times alter.

*The Education of a Prince.* By EDWARD EVERETT HALE. Chautauquan, October.

The prince is the eighty-nine per cent. of the population of the United States which does work that requires intelligence, and rules the country. The prince shall (1) be trained to purity, honor, justice, truth; (2) enjoy the whole range of history, especially the history of America, his own land; (3) shall have the key of the treasures of literature, that till he die he may enter that treasure house when he will; (4) shall have the key as well to the treasures of nature. Chautauqua and its allies are teaching these things to the prince.

*How shall the Indians be Educated?* By Senator JAMES H. KYLE. North American Review, October.

"Industrial development must go hand in hand with the school, establishing the habits of labor and stimulating an ambition for accumulating property. The factors in the solution are: First, a belief that the Indian can be civilized; second, a well-defined policy; and, third, the divorcement of the entire Indian question from politics."

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## FOREIGN NOTES

THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION.

*The Nation, December 13, 1894.*

The battle for possession of the London School Board must still go on, for the elections of November 22 can be described only as a drawn battle, with the gain of prestige for the Progressives. The total number of votes polled in 1891, when popular interest in schools was at a low ebb, was 891,000; in 1894, 1,587,000. In 1891 the Moderates (dogmatic party) numbered 28, the Progressives 22, various others 5. The board of 1894 contains 29 Moderates and 26 Progressives. But another comment deserves to be made: the total voting for the moderates was 671,734, for the Progressives, 807,632, so that in mere votes the latter had a majority. It is worth nothing, too, that almost always the Progressives head the poll with triumphant majorities; the Moderates creep in at the tail. Mr. Athelstan Riley, despite great efforts made by the Church party in Chelsea, was at the bottom of the poll, Mr. Diggle was lower than at the last election, and three of his most obedient henchmen were flung out. Mr. Lyulph Stanley will move what will practically be a vote of confidence in the teachers, which, if passed, will mean a reversal of the church policy, a reassertion of the compromise of 1871. The London School Board has more than half a million scholars upon its books, and administers funds to the extent of more than £2,000,000 per annum.

*The Journal of Education, (London,) Dec. 1, 1894.*

The battle of the London School Board has been fought, and the Moderates have gained a Pyrrhic victory, which is a moral triumph for the Progressives, and is likely to prove something more than a moral triumph. In almost every case where the champions of the two parties have been pitted together the Progressive has been returned at the head of the poll, sometimes with an overwhelming majority—13,000 in the case of Mr. Macnamara, 11,000 in the case of Mr. Gover, and 9,000 in the City for Miss Davenport Hill. The Chairman himself stands fourth on the poll, with 16,000 votes below Mr. Stanley, the leader of the opposition, and in Chelsea Mr. Riley gets in at the bottom of the poll and by the skin of his teeth. Mr. Diggle returns to power with a majority diminished from eleven to three, while on the total returns the opposition received 135,000 more votes than the government.